



Habitat Partnership Committee Connection

In This Issue:

Coordinator's Corner	2
In the Spotlight	3
Project Funding Update	6
Meet Your Local HPCs	11
Meetings and Announcements	12

June 2012

Issue 9



From your Statewide HPC Chairman Commissioner John W. Harris

It may be hard to believe, but 2012 marks 20-years of the Habitat Partnership Committee (HPC) program in Arizona. Since the program (previously known as the Arizona Elk HPC) and affiliated Local HPCs establishment by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission in 1992, the program's concept has expanded beyond elk and livestock conflicts, and now reflects an ecosystem approach to wildlife and habitat management actions. Through the continued support of the Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) Special Big Game License Tag (SBGLT) fund program, over \$19.5 million have been raised for habitat enhancement and big game wildlife management activities in Arizona. Since 2002, this has included over 700 projects funded through the HPC process. Included in this total are 56 proposals funded in the 2011-2012 cycle for \$1,474,431. You can see the full list of recently funded project proposals on page 6.

As you may already know, all proceeds from the sale or raffle of SBGLTs is returned to the Department, to be used specifically for management actions related to the big game species for which it was raised. Recently, the Commission listened carefully to concerns raised by many wildlife conservation organizations (WCOs) that have been involved with the marketing and sales of SBGLTs. Due to costs associated with credit and debit card transactions fees, the Commission has adopted new language that will allow for the collection of estimated credit or debit card transaction fees, subject to several conditions. In essence, WCOs have to offer another method of payment that does not incur the transaction fee. If a fee will be charged, the WCOs have to let potential buyers know about the estimated transaction fee through advertising, the transaction fee must be paid in addition to the tag or raffle ticket fee, and if the estimated transaction fee exceeds the actual transaction fee from the buyer's financial institution, the difference must be provided to the Department. Because the SBGLT Program is a critical funding component for project proposals submitted through the HPC process, I wanted constituents to be aware of these recent changes related to the Department's SBGLT Program. If you have any questions regarding this topic, please don't hesitate to contact the Department's Game Branch for more information.

(continued on page 2)

From your Statewide HPC Chairman Commissioner John W. Harris

(continued from page 1)

Another growing topic of discussion across Arizona and the west has been the issue of recreational access for sportsmen and the general public. The Department currently has several programs aimed at obtaining, enhancing, or retaining access to public lands, one of which includes the HPC program. Although funding from the HPC-SBGLT programs does not directly pay for any recreational-access-related activities, the partnerships and mutual benefits gained from wildlife habitat enhancement projects coordinated with private landowners or land management entities plays a vital role in the overall picture of recreational access issues, and the development of partnerships should not be overlooked during the planning or implementation stages of a project. I urge all constituents to remain vigilant on this topic and to remember to respect private property rights and rules established for recreating on public lands. The continued development of these critical partnerships is key not only to existing and future recreational access issues, but also enhances the Department's ability to continue effectively managing wildlife resources across all the various land ownerships across the state.

The next State HPC meeting will be held on **June 30, 2012** at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Region I Office in Pinetop, Arizona, and I invite all interested parties to attend. The meeting agenda can be found on the HPC website, along with the draft meeting minutes from the February State HPC meeting. Thank you all for your continued support of the HPC program, and I look forward to continuing our work to benefit Arizona's wildlife resources and their habitats.

Coordinator's Corner Reuben Terán, HPC Coordinator

Since this time of year is typically spent planning and coordinating next year's projects, I would like to remind all potential applicants that project proposals for the 2012-2013 funding cycle are due **September 1st**. One item for potential applicants to be aware of for the upcoming funding cycle is the most recently updated Project Proposal Forms (*revised May 2012*) available on the HPC website (http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/hpc.shtml). Because of the updates included in the forms, please note that the HPC Program will no longer be accepting proposals on any of the older versions. In addition to the project planning resources already available on the website, a few other reference documents to be looking out for in the next month include the 2012 HPC Priorities Guidelines (developed in coordination with our Wildlife Conservation Organization partners) and the 2012 Cost Guidelines for Water Developments.

Recently, the Department's Landowner Relations Program was able to fill several vacant positions, and I would like to introduce 3 new staff members that will now provide support for the HPC process. Ms. Rachel Williams (RWilliams@azgfd.gov) is the new Landowner Incentive Specialist for Region 1, Ms. Shannon Lawrence (SLawrence@azgfd.gov) is the new Habitat Stewardship Specialist for Region 5, and Mr. Tim Grosch (TGrosch@azgfd.gov) is the new Landowner Relations Specialist in Region 6. In addition to the duties assigned through the Regional Landowner Relations Programs, all positions have been identified to assist with the Local HPC Resource Management Plan Coordinator role as outlined in the [HPC Charter](#). I would encourage using them as a resource, along with the Local HPCs, in assimilating species and site specific information during project planning efforts and the development of project proposals.

As one final update, I would also like to introduce Mr. David Daniels, Wildlife Manager for GMU 23 North, as the new coordinator for the Payson Natural Resource Committee (PNRC). David has replaced Ms. Natalie Robb, Region 6 Wildlife Manager Field Supervisor, and we thank you Natalie for all your hard work and dedication coordinating the efforts of the PNRC.

In the Spotlight:

Project Title(s): Bighorn Sheep Collars for Sheep-Highway Research During Reconstruction of US Highway 93 (2008) US Highway 93 Post-Construction Desert Bighorn Sheep Capture and Monitoring (2010)	
Project Proponent: Arizona Game and Fish Department - Research Branch	
Region and Game Management Unit: Region III / GMUs 15B & 15C	
Local Habitat Partnership Committee: N/A	
Special Big Game License Tag Funds: • Bighorn Sheep Special Tag Funds	\$150,148
Cost Share Funds: • Arizona Game and Fish Department • Arizona Department of Transportation • U.S. Department of Transportation: Federal Highway Administration • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act	\$564,800
Total Project Costs:	\$714,948

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's Research Branch has been conducting wildlife-highway research since 2001. This research has increased the knowledge of wildlife-highway relationships and helped make roads and highways safer by reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions and promoting wildlife permeability across them. Through the Habitat Partnership Committee (HPC) process 2 separate, but related, projects were funded in 2008 and 2010 with Bighorn Sheep Special Big Game License Tag (SBGLT) funds raised by the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society (ADBSS) and the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle.

Bighorn Sheep Collars for Sheep-Highway Research During Reconstruction of US Highway 93:
HPC Project #08-701

As with any large-scale transportation project, the upgrade of US 93 from a two-lane to a four-lane divided highway had the potential to create a larger barrier to wildlife movement and further fragment the Black Mountains of northwest Arizona. However, during the planning stages of the US 93 expansion, constituents



recognized that habitat fragmentation and highway safety needed to be addressed, and the widening project became one of the first projects in the nation to use movement data from GPS collared bighorn sheep for the identification of wildlife passage structure locations. Prior to construction activities, research effort through capture and collaring bighorn sheep began in 2004, which ultimately resulted in over 73,000 GPS locations. Further analysis of sheep movement data identified five regularly traveled ridges within the study area, which ultimately led to the design and construction of the nation's first 3 wildlife overpasses (and two other large highway

bridges) for the purpose of maintaining habitat connectivity for bighorn sheep and other wildlife species.

This particular US 93 bighorn sheep research project began in November of 2008 within mileposts 3 - 17 with the capture and GPS collaring of 30 new desert bighorn sheep within the vicinity of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The project was designed to evaluate the movements of bighorn sheep during the re-construction of US 93 to:

- provide baseline data to evaluate the implementation of specific mitigation strategies to address the impact of construction activities on bighorn sheep,
- promote motorist highway safety associated with reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions
- promote wildlife viability through enhanced landscape connectivity and wildlife permeability across US 93
- increase bighorn sheep hunting and non-consumptive recreational opportunities through reduced bighorn-vehicle collisions (direct loss) and habitat fragmentation



**2008 Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society
Capture Team**

The ability to implement adaptive management strategies like modifying fencing plans to effectively direct wildlife to the crossings, and modifying the overpass approaches that would safely and effectively facilitate movements of sheep and other wildlife across the highway was a key component to making the overall project a success.

To further supplement sound management decisions made by the project team, the SBGLT funds awarded in 2008 were used to facilitate the collaring of sheep prior to the lambing season, increase the total number of sheep movement data samples collected, and provide an extra round of capture and collaring to complement the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) funded capture effort that occurred later in the project.

US Highway 93 Post-Construction Desert Bighorn Sheep Capture and Monitoring: HPC Project #10-701



As highway contractors completed the final touches to the project in early 2011, another project proposal was being submitted through the HPC process to evaluate of the effectiveness of the first ever wildlife overpasses constructed for desert bighorn sheep. Through coordination with the ADBSS, SBGLT funding was awarded for aerial telemetry and capture services for a follow-up capture and collaring of 15 desert bighorn sheep. In addition, still

cameras and video surveillance systems were installed at the bridges to evaluate use of



the overpasses. Shortly after the installation, video cameras captured the first image of a desert bighorn sheep using a wildlife overpass. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrKCM26r1FM>. In the end, this project has successfully reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions, while enhancing habitat connectivity for wildlife. Currently, the collars used in this project are still collecting sheep movement data, and recently the ADOT Arizona Transportation Research Center approved funding for the long-term evaluation of the overpasses and fencing. With these funds, the final complement of collars will be placed on sheep to assess long-term learning curves and seasonal use.

The coordination and support of the various partners involved throughout the project highlights the problem solving and innovative approaches used to address a complex environmental challenge. The lessons learned from this project can be applied to future highway projects with wildlife-vehicle issues. Besides benefiting desert bighorn sheep and the increasing motorist safety, the US 93 Project is also nationally acclaimed. This project has been awarded the Federal Highways Administration Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative award, the Arizona Public Works Project of the Year award, and just recently a 2012 National Environmental Excellence Award by The National Association of Environmental Professionals.

This project combined with other projects in Arizona, has helped persuade the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation committee to select Arizona as their 2013 conference site, with the US 93 project area as a possible field trip. Many thanks go out to all the numerous staff, volunteers, and partners who assisted with the implementation and funding of this project.



Project Funding Update

Ruth Gregory, Game Program Coordinator

The 2012 funding coordination meeting between Arizona Game and Fish Department staff and our wildlife conservation organization (WCO) funding partners took place on January 28, 2012. Although the proposal review cycle is over, things don't slow down as this time of year is spent on setting up the project funding index codes, developing project collection agreements, compiling status updates on previously funded projects, soliciting applications for next year's Special Big Game License Tags, and gearing up for the next HPC funding cycle. Through coordination with our WCO funding partners, the following projects were approved for funding during the 2011-2012 cycle:

Project Name	Local HPC	Antelope Tag	Bighorn Sheep Tag	Black Bear Tag	Buffalo Tag	Elk Tag	Javelina Tag	Mountain Lion Tag	Mule Deer Tag	Turkey Tag	Whitetail Deer Tag	Total Funding
Jacks Canyon Catchment - AZGFD #1014	Forage Resource Study Group			5,000		33,919			15,000			\$53,919
Iron Basin Chaparral Treatment Project	Kingman								30,000			\$30,000
12A/12B Double Count Deer Survey	None								24,000			\$24,000
Fence Improvements for House Rock Valley Pronghorn	None	3,400										\$3,400
Little Springs Point Trick Tank	None		36,769									\$36,769
Little Springs Trick Tank Apron Replacement	None		1,000						8,941			\$9,941
Gooseneck Trick Tank Apron Replacement	None								7,706			\$7,706
Mt. Logan / Turkey (#986) Water Catchment Redevelopment	None								20,000	3,800		\$23,800
Mustang Point WLC Redevelopment	None		30,495									\$30,495
Restoration of Dirt Tank 3 on House Rock Wildlife Area	None				9,000							\$9,000

Project Name	Local HPC	Antelope Tag	Bighorn Sheep Tag	Black Bear Tag	Buffalo Tag	Elk Tag	Javelina Tag	Mountain Lion Tag	Mule Deer Tag	Turkey Tag	Whitetail Deer Tag	Total Funding
Wildlife Crossing and Fencing for the Paunsaugunt Deer Herd Migration Corridor	None								25,000 / year for 4 years			\$25,000
Westside Kaibab Mule Deer Project	None								15,000			\$15,000
White Tanks West Catchment 679 - White Tanks #1 Redevelopment	None						4,000	7,000	25,000			\$36,000
Buckeye Hills Lo Siento Catchment 1021 Re-development	None		39,466									\$39,466
Statewide Bighorn Sheep Surveys for Fall 2012	None		81,000									\$81,000
Statewide Emergency Helicopter Maintenance and Water Hauling of Bighorn Sheep Water Developments	None		15,000									\$15,000
Elk Stewardship Program	None					39,966						\$39,966
Elk Habitat Enhancement - Block Funding	None					50,000						\$50,000
Agua Fria Grasslands Pronghorn Movement Adaptive Management Project	Payson Natural Resource Committee	7,500										7,500
Flying V & H Prescribed Burn	Payson Natural Resource Committee					25,000			10,000		15,000	\$50,000
Potato Butte Grassland Maintenance	Payson Natural Resource Committee					7,000			5,000			\$12,000
Houston Mesa Restoration	Payson Natural Resource Committee					65,000			10,000		10,000	\$85,000

Project Name	Local HPC	Antelope Tag	Bighorn Sheep Tag	Black Bear Tag	Buffalo Tag	Elk Tag	Javelina Tag	Mountain Lion Tag	Mule Deer Tag	Turkey Tag	Whitetail Deer Tag	Total Funding
Capture of Desert Bighorn Sheep in Unit 22 and 24B for Supplemental Release into 37B (Mineral Mountains)	Payson Natural Resource Committee		40,000									\$40,000
Mingus Mountain #1 (#399) & Mingus Mountain #5 (#403) Wildlife Water Redevelopments	Prescott					34,710			20,000			\$54,710
Boquillas Earth Tank Cleaning	Prescott					15,000			10,000			\$25,000
Rockhouse Burn	Safford		10,000	10,000							18,000	\$38,000
Aravaipa South Rim Prescribed Fire	Safford		19,000						10,000		9,000	\$38,000
High Creek Water Development	Safford			5,000								\$5,000
Jackson Cabin-Walnut Spring Improvement	Safford									4,000		\$4,000
Bonita Grasslands Restoration - Phase 2 - KY Ranch	Safford	15,000										\$15,000
Railroad Allotment P/J Thinning and Grassland Maintenance - Phase II	Show Low					53,025			10,000			\$63,025
Catchment 1023 (Pink Cliffs) Repairs and Renovation	Show Low					5,000			10,000			\$15,000
EZ Roll II (Mechanical Fence Rolling Machine)	Show Low											\$0
San Pedro River National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) Wildlife Water Maintenance and Development - Phase 1-4	Sierra Vista/ Douglas						4,400					\$4,400

[illegible]

Project Name	Local HPC	Antelope Tag	Bighorn Sheep Tag	Black Bear Tag	Buffalo Tag	Elk Tag	Javelina Tag	Mountain Lion Tag	Mule Deer Tag	Turkey Tag	Whitetail Deer Tag	Total Funding
A-Diamond Ranch Solar Water Project	Tucson								4,885		4,885	\$9,770
96 Hills Water Development Project - Phase 5	Tucson						1,800		25,000			\$26,800
Southwest Whetstone Mountains Water Development Phase 2	Tucson										18,000	\$18,000
Pat Springs Pipeline Operation and Maintenance 2012-2013	Williams/Flagstaff	1,000				1,450			1,450			\$3,900
Effect of Fall Harvest on Turkey Populations in Arizona	Williams/Flagstaff									14,000		\$14,000
Grassland Conservation on the Williams Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest (Ida and Irishman Dam Grassland Maintenance and Restoration)	Williams/Flagstaff					90,000			10,000			\$100,000
Unit 9 Water Project	Williams/Flagstaff					52,730						\$52,730
Ohaco Ranch High Point and Ellsworth Fuel 2012	Winslow	2,000				4,000			1,400			\$7,400
Ohaco Ranch Dirt Tank Cleaning 2012	Winslow					7,500						\$7,500

**GRAND TOTAL OF PROJECTS FUNDED DURING THE
2011-2012 CYCLE = \$1,474,431**

Thank you, partners in conservation!

Meet your local HPC Chairpersons as of June 2012

<i>HPC</i>	<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>AGFD Contact</i>	<i>Email</i>
Forage Resource Study Group	Stephen Williams	swilliams@land.az.gov	Larry Phoenix	lphoenix@azgfd.gov
Fredonia HPC	The Fredonia HPC (currently inactive)			
Kingman HPC	The Kingman HPC (currently inactive)			
Payson Natural Resources Committee	Vacant		David Daniels	ddaniels@azgfd.gov
Prescott HPC	Randy Lamb Gail Steiger	ranman53@aol.com gailsteiger@msn.com	Tom Finley	tfinley@azgfd.gov
Show Low HPC	Vacant		Bob Birkeland	bbirkeland@azgfd.gov
Safford HPC	Scott Heap Daniel Ward	scottheap54@yahoo.com wardsbuilders@q.com	Duane Aubuchon	daubuchon@azgfd.gov
Sierra Vista-Douglas HPC	John Millican	j2dbmill@msn.com	Brad Fulk	bfulk@azgfd.gov
Southwest Arizona HPC	Jean Wilson	jeanrenegade@gmail.com	Mike Sumner	msumner@azgfd.gov
Springerville-Alpine HPC	Rex Brown	brownrm@frontiernet.net	Michael Godwin	mikegodwin@frontier.net
Tucson HPC	Brian Dolan	bfd@dakotacom.net	Joe Sacco	jsacco@azgfd.gov
Williams-Flagstaff HPC	Tom Mackin	tmmackin@q.com	Larry Phoenix	lphoenix@azgfd.gov
Winslow HPC	Vacant		Bob Birkeland	bbirkeland@azgfd.gov

Got questions about the HPC Program?

Contact:

Reuben Terán, HPC Coordinator at 623-236-7350 or by email at rteran@azgfd.gov

Ruth Gregory, Game Program Coordinator at 623-236-7349 or by email at rgregory@azgfd.gov



**Arizona Game and Fish
Department**

5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086

PHONE:
(602) 942-3000

FAX:
(623) 236-7929



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.azgfd.gov

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE

Free news
by email



Sign-up for Arizona Game
and Fish e-New today by
clicking [HERE](#).

Meetings & Announcements

- **Safford HPC Meeting – June 20, 2012**

Bureau of Land Management Safford Field Office Conference Room
711 14th Avenue
Safford, AZ 85546
6:00 PM

For more information contact:

Duane Aubuchon, Region V Wildlife Manager Supervisor - daubuchon@azgfd.gov

- **Forage Resource Study Group Meeting – June 26, 2012**

Raymond Ranch Wildlife Area
(approximately 40 miles southeast of the I-17/I-40 interchange in Flagstaff, AZ)
Directions: From Flagstaff, go east on I-40 to exit #225 (Buffalo Range Road).
Continue nine miles south and look for wildlife area signs.
8:00 AM

For more information contact:

Larry Phoenix, Region II Wildlife Manager Supervisor - [Larry Phoenix](mailto:LarryPhoenix@azgfd.gov)

- **State HPC Meeting: Saturday, June 30, 2012**

Arizona Game and Fish Department
Pinetop Regional Office
2878 E. White Mountain Blvd.
Pinetop, AZ 85935

For more information contact:

Reuben Terán, HPC State Coordinator - rteran@azgfd.gov

- **Payson Natural Resources Committee Meeting –
August 1, 2012**

Payson Police Department Conference Room,
303 North Beeline Highway
Payson, AZ 85541
6:00 PM

For more information contact:

David Daniels, Region VI Wildlife Manager - ddaniels@azgfd.gov

- **Project Proposal Deadline - September 1, 2012**

- Before implementing a project with funded with Special Big Game License Tag funds, please be sure to contact the Department's Game Branch Administrative Coordinator Ruth Gregory at Rgregory@azgfd.gov for guidance on the Department processes **prior** to implementing your Habitat Partnership Committee funded project.
- Looking to get out into the field and assist with habitat improvement projects? Contact the Department's Volunteer Coordinator Jamie Lyons at JLyons@azgfd.gov for more information. Opportunities are also available through some of our wildlife conservation partners. To see a list of upcoming habitat conservation projects please visit the [Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation](http://ArizonaSportsmenforWildlifeConservation.org) website.